

A BIT OF HISTORY

From the Pen of an Erudite West Virginia Writer.

"DISTRICT OF WEST AUGUSTA."

VAGUENESS OF THE EARLY REFERENCES TO THE "DISTRICT" CLEARED—SOME INTERESTING FACTS—THE BOUNDARY LINES DESIGNATED BY THE LEGISLATURE ENCLOSED NO TERRITORY—HOW THE TERRITORY WAS DIVIDED—OHIO COUNTY WAS A PORTION OF THE ORIGINAL AREA—HU MAXWELL'S CONTRIBUTION TO STATE HISTORY.

Special Correspondence of Intelligencer.

BEVERLY, W. Va., June 20.—The early records of the territory now included in West Virginia contain frequent reference to the "District of West Augusta," but at no place and at no time has there ever been published so far as I know, a clear statement of what that district comprised, and what its political status was. Perhaps no such statement is possible now; for West Augusta appears to have been an uncertain quantity, neither its beginning, nor its ending being by process of law. In this article I shall not undertake to clear up the vagueness of early reference to and descriptions of the district, but shall endeavor to give a history (perhaps incomplete) of the acts of the Virginia assembly relating to the subject; and I shall also aim to show that the boundary lines, as designated by the legislature, enclosed no territory, because one side of the district was left open. In the phraseology of surveyors, "it failed to close."

In July, 1775, a "convention of delegates" from the counties and corporations of Virginia was held to provide for the defense of the colony "in the present time of danger"—the beginning of the Revolutionary War—and it was resolved that two regiments, of 1,020 men each, should be raised. To facilitate the raising of the troops, and to proportion them equally, Virginia was divided into sixteen districts. One of the districts was called West Augusta. This is the earliest mention of West Augusta in any legal proceeding or public document so far as I have found. The western part of Augusta county was spoken of as West Augusta before that time; but the name seems to have been used in a general way for all the country west of the Allegheny mountains.

In the same month, July, 1775, the Virginia assembly passed a law requiring settlers in West Augusta to pay taxes on lands claimed by them, although they had no patents. This appears to have been the first mention of West Augusta in an act of the Virginia legislature. The district was not created by law, but after July, 1775, it was frequently referred to in the laws as passed by the legislature. On May 1, 1776, an act was passed, allowing West Augusta a delegate to the assembly; yet no bound or limit for the district had been designated. An act passed at the same session of the legislature, May, 1776, speaks of a sheriff and court for West Augusta; thus allowing the inference that the district had a separate court and separate sheriff. (See Henning's Statutes, Vol. ix, p. 264.)

I am satisfied that West Augusta never had a court of its own. If it had, the place where it was held would certainly be known, even if the records should be lost. Most assuredly no records of a West Augusta court are known to be in existence. In all probability, that which was spoken of as the West Augusta court was the regular, but somewhat itinerant court of Augusta county. That court was hard to keep track of at the time, and it is not to be wondered at if confusion has resulted after the lapse of a century.

Staunton was the lawful seat of Augusta, but in 1774 and 1775 Lord Dunmore, then governor of Virginia, made much trouble, both for Virginia and Pennsylvania, by seizing western Pennsylvania and annexing it to Augusta county. In February, 1775, the court was moved from Staunton to Pittsburgh, then called Fort Dunmore. The next month the court was back in Staunton again; and in the following September it was again in Pittsburgh. The confusion and controversy did not end there, but without following the matter further, it appears probable that what was spoken of as the West Augusta court was only the western session of the court which should have been held in Staunton.

In October, 1776, the first attempt was made by the Virginia legislature to fix the boundaries of the district of West Augusta. The attempt succeeded about as well as the Englishman's who bound the British empire as follows: "On the west by the Pacific ocean, on the south by the Antarctic icebergs, on the east by the ends of the world, and on the north by the Aurora borealis." With an inadequate knowledge of the state's geography, and in language vague and ambiguous, the line between Augusta county and the district of West Augusta is given thus: "Beginning on the Allegheny mountains between the heads of Potomac, Cheat and Greenbrier rivers, thence along the ridge of moun-

tains which divides the waters of Cheat from those of Greenbrier, and that branch of the Monongahela river called Tygart's Valley river, to the Monongahela river, thence up the said river and the west fork thereof to Bingerman's creek, on the northwest side of the said west fork, thence up the said creek to the head thereof, thence in a direct course to the head of Middle Island creek, a branch of the Ohio, and thence to the Ohio, including all the waters of said creek in the aforesaid district of West Augusta, all that territory lying to the northward of the said boundary and to the westward of the state of Pennsylvania and Maryland shall be deemed and is hereby declared to be in the district of West Augusta.

The language and punctuation of the above are quoted exactly from the law as it passed the legislature. A person with a map of the region before him may elude out what he supposes the lawmakers intended the line to be. Probably the starting place was meant to be that point on the present Pendleton county line where Randolph and Pocahontas have a common corner, thence following the dividing ridge between the Greenbrier and Cheat, in a southwesterly course to a point opposite the head of Tygart's Valley, thence following the dividing ridge between Cheat and the waters of the Monongahela to Point Marion, the mouth of Cheat; thence up the Monongahela to the mouth of the West Fork, above Fairmont; thence to the Ohio, as is stated in the act as quoted. Virginia was supposed or claimed to extend northward to include much of Pennsylvania, and the intention plainly was that West Augusta should cover all of Virginia's territory in that quarter. But what was the eastern and southeastern line of West Augusta? There was none. Immediately after the district of West Augusta was given a boundary (as was supposed), the legislature cut it into

across the entire eastern side of Preston, the eastern Randolph, twenty miles wide and forty long, never were in West Augusta. This territory was still Augusta county. It has been cut up, added to and taken from counties since then; but, so far as I know, there never has been an act of the legislature taking it from Augusta. Of course, the question will never be re-opened, and it exists now as a relic or a curiosity; but the title of Monongalia county to that strip of territory was empty and unfounded. This strip was sub-divided along with the rest of Monongalia, and in 1784 part of it was in Harrison; in 1786 Harrison's part was given to Randolph; in 1818 the other part was given to Preston, and in 1856 a portion of Randolph's part was given to Tucker, and part is still in Randolph. Should the state of Maryland succeed in establishing the head of the south branch, instead of the head of the north branch, as its corner, the western line of Maryland, from the top of the Allegheny mountains to the Pennsylvania line, would follow almost exactly the old eastern boundary of the district of West Virginia.

The sub-division of the district into three counties, Ohio, Monongalia and Youghiogheny in 1776, did not abolish the district. These three counties then formed the district. An act of the Virginia legislature was passed in October, 1783, directing the sheriff of Monongalia county to open polls at two places in the county for the election of a senator and delegates for the district of West Augusta. The polls were opened at Bush's Fort, on Buckhannon river, and at Morgantown. It should be stated that prior to that time (in 1775 and in 1780) two large tracts had been taken from Augusta county and added to Monongalia county, extending Monongalia from Tygart's Valley to the Ohio river, including all or parts of Webster, Up-

GALVEZ'S BOMBAST.

Wants the Sky to Fall Flat Before American Step on Cuban Soil.

HAVANA, June 21.—Senor Galvez, president of the colonial cabinet, has closed the debates in the chamber with a message to the deputies, in which he repeated that he did not wish to see autonomy established for Cubans or for Spaniards, but for all the inhabitants of the island of Cuba.

Continuing, the president paid a tribute to the efforts of Captain General Blanco under the existing circumstances and pointed out that the public offices had been divided between Cubans and Spaniards. He concluded by saying: "Let the sky fall flat and sink us in an abyss before the daring foreign invader's foot tramples on Spanish soil." These words of Senor Galvez were warmly applauded by the deputies and others assembled in the hall.

The Cuban congress then approved the address in reply to the President's message and to the message of the captain general and the address was delivered to the spirit of the war, and is earning many a dollar for our cause. The prince is a famous athlete, and at the entertainments which swell Washington society is giving his pose for the benefit of the Red Cross. Prince Troubetzkoi is also an actor, and takes part in private theatricals, on special occasions. His special mission in Washington

On Friday morning last the United States battleship Texas, it is announced, endeavored to cover the landing of an American force at Punta Cabrera, province of Santiago de Cuba, but, the official report adds, the Americans were repulsed by the Spanish troops under Col. Aldea, with the loss of several men. The firing, it is further asserted, lasted half an hour.

It is announced at the palace that a Spanish guerrilla force has been engaged with a body of insurgents near the railroad at Dagame, province of Havana. The insurgents, it appears, exploded a dynamite bomb and the guerrillas captured another and similar bomb before it could be exploded, after which the insurgents are said to have



A PATRIOTIC PRINCE.

Troubetzkoi, the Husband of Amelle River, is Working Hard for Us.

Prince Troubetzkoi is one of the sights of Washington. His claims to distinction are so manifold that it is impossible to enumerate them; but the chief one is his patriotism. Though born in Italy and educated abroad he has entered into the spirit of the war, and is earning many a dollar for our cause.

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Judge Ferguson was recognized as an authority on constitutional law and held a place prominent among the jurists of West Virginia.

DULL AND UNINTERESTING Is the Debate on Hawaiian Annexation in the Senate.

WASHINGTON, June 21.—Interest in the occasion of Hawaiian annexation which is proceeding in the senate already has begun to flag. Early in the present session the senate debated the question behind closed doors for six weeks. During that time a majority of the speakers were accorded close attention. It is evident from the proceedings to-day that the senators will not become enthusiastic over arguments which are not now new to them. To-day Mr. White, (Dem., Cal.), the leader of the opponents of annexation, spoke for three hours and a half. His argument was skilled and was presented with oratorical ability, but it failed to command the attention of the senators. It really deserved, Mr. White had not concluded his argument when the resolutions were laid aside for the day. He will resume his speech to-morrow and probably will occupy the entire day.

Mr. Mitchell, (Dem., Wis.), opened the discussion to-day with a brief speech in opposition to the resolution. Among the bills passed was one providing severe penalties for the malicious injury or destruction of submarine mines, torpedoes, fortifications or other defenses.

Death of Judge Ferguson. Special Dispatch to the Intelligencer.

CHARLESTON, W. Va., June 21.—Judge James H. Ferguson, one of the leading lawyers of the state, died here to-day, at the age of eighty-two years.

GOLD DUST.

Ask Your Neighbor



whose house is conspicuously clean, whose work worries her least, whose leisure time is greatest, how she manages. The chances are ten to one she will answer:

"I do all my cleaning with

GOLD DUST Washing Powder

Sold by all grocers. Largest package—greatest economy. THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY, Chicago, St. Louis, New York, Boston, Philadelphia.

SEE THAT THE FAC-SIMILE SIGNATURE OF

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IS ON THE WRAPPER OF EVERY BOTTLE OF

CASTORIA

Castoria is put up in one-also bottles only. It is not sold in bulk. Don't allow anyone to sell you anything else on the plea or promise that it is "just as good" and "will answer every purpose." See that you get C-A-S-T-O-R-I-A.

Fac-Simile Signature of Charles H. Fletcher NEW YORK.

Perfect Remedy for Constipation, Sour Stomach, Diarrhoea, Worms, Convulsions, Feverishness and Loss of Sleep.

Regular size 50c and \$1.00. Every bottle guaranteed.

If the Baby is Cutting Teeth. Be sure and use that old and well-tried remedy, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for children teething. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays all pain, cures wind colic and is the best remedy for diarrhoea. Twenty-five cents a bottle.

BOB MOORE, of LaFayette, Ind., says that for constipation he has found DeWitt's Little Early Risers to be perfect. They never gripe. Try them for stomach and liver troubles. Charles R. Goetz, Market and Twelfth streets; Chatham Street, Forty-sixth and Jacob streets; A. E. Schoch, No. 607 Main street; Exley Bros., Penn and Zane streets; Bowls & Co., Reid street.

EXACT COPY OF WRAPPER.



ASTOR'S MOUNTAIN BATTERY.

The famous Astor battery has received its Hotchkiss mountain howitzers. They are the finest field pieces of light artillery that have ever been manufactured. Each field piece has a small silver plate imbedded, on which is inscribed: "Presented to the United States Government by John Jacob Astor."

three counties, Ohio, Monongalia and Youghiogheny, and gave them boundaries. There is no lack of evidence that Monongalia was understood to include nearly all of Preston, all of Tucker as far east as Fairfax stone, and all of Randolph east of Cheat mountain. Yet, a strip of country, from the top of the Allegheny, across the present counties of Tucker, Randolph and Preston, to the Pennsylvania line, was not north of any part of the dividing line between Augusta and West Augusta, and therefore had never been in West Augusta—all of West Augusta being north of the line above referred to. Consequently, at least five hundred square miles of the original Monongalia county, which the act of 1776 says was taken from West Augusta, was not taken from West Augusta, but was entirely outside of it—east of it.

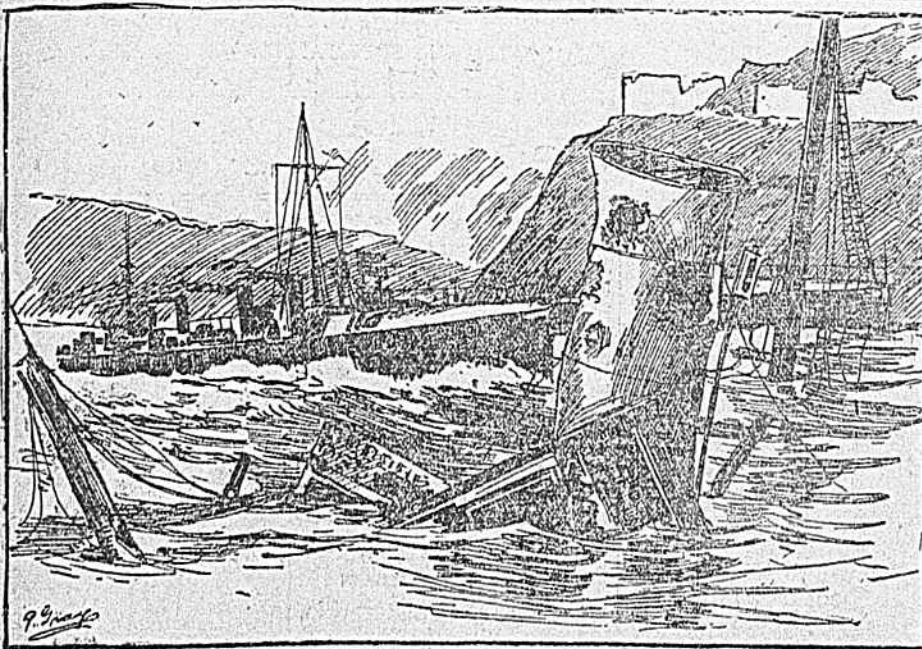
If the starting point for the line between Augusta and West Augusta had been taken forty miles further north-east, on the Allegheny, where the Hampshire line then crossed, the district would have been enclosed. I suspect that the legislators believed that they were starting at that point. As it was, they left a gap of forty miles. A strip of country twelve miles wide

shur, Lewis, Harrison, Gilmer, Doddridge, Ritchie and Wood.

In 1784 Harrison was formed from Monongalia with its first county seat at the residence of George Jackson, on Buckhannon river. The next year the county seat was moved to Clarksburg. Youghiogheny county, one of the three in which the district of West Augusta was divided, soon ceased to exist. When the line between Pennsylvania and Virginia was fixed, it cut the county in two parts, neither of which was large enough for a county. Thereupon one part was added to Virginia's counties, the other part to Pennsylvania's. The last mention of the district of West Augusta in the proceedings of the Virginia legislature seems to have been in 1783.

Fourth of July orators and others delight in quoting Washington as saying that, if driven by the British from the seaboard, he would retire to West Augusta and raise the standard of liberty, and gather about him the men who would defeat the invaders. The sentiment is fine, but Washington said nothing about West Augusta. He said Augusta, and no doubt he meant everything in Virginia west of the Blue Ridge which included Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, and all the surrounding region.

HU MAXWELL.



HOBSON'S MERRIMAC A MONUMENT.

With the United States fleet blockading the entrance to Santiago harbor and Admiral Cervera's fleet hermetically sealed up, the Merrimac, sunk by Richmond Pearson Hobson, bids fair to remain a monument to his bravery. When Cervera tries to dynamite the Merrimac and clear the channel for a night escape, Sampson pours a ton of metal into his fleet.